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PRESS GUIDANCE RE JOANNE OMANG ARTICLE (10/15/86)

- The White House denies allegations that any staff member has been directing aid to the contras and is responsible for the deaths of the two Americans killed on October 5, 1986.
- The Americans who were resupplying Nicaraguan democratic resistance forces last week were acting on their own initiative and responsibility as private citizens.
- According to the statements by the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) and by the Panamanian company, Corporate Air Services, employing those Americans, the resupply efforts have been conducted by these private individuals and companies over the past two years. The resupply flight on October 5 was not a new undertaking, but represented one of many efforts by a variety of private citizens.
- Allegations of government involvement in these private resupply efforts have surfaced periodically over the past two years, but usually during a crucial Congressional vote over resuming U.S. military aid to the Nicaraguan freedom fighters.

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- These allegations have been thoroughly investigated by both the Executive and Legislative Branches whenever they arose -- most recently during the last Congressional vote that approved \$100 million in military and humanitarian aid for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance.
- The role of the NSC staff member, LTCOL Oliver North, was found by Congressional subcommittees to be merely that which was claimed -- informational. As NSC point of contact on UNO matters, LTCOL North was aware of UNO efforts to keep with their forces resupplied in Nicaragua after U.S. military funding ceased in May 1984.
- While the President has been and is in sympathy with the patriotic efforts of concerned citizens to help UNO restore democracy to Nicaragua, he has been at pains to ensure that U.S. Government support of those efforts be in complete consonance with the applicable legislation.

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The House and Senate Intelligence Committees have reviewed the allegations which have arisen from time to time that Colonel North is engaged in improper activities concerning Central America. These charges are patently untrue and both committees have found them groundless. Colonel North remains a highly competent and trusted member of the NSC staff.

- NSC spokesman

PAUL HANLEY

Released on 2/22/98  
under provisions of E.O. 12356  
by K. Johnson, National Security Council

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